

How Does a Small Area Plan Relate to the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning, and Future Redevelopment?

The [Comprehensive Plan](#) (Comp Plan) is a high-level guiding document that sets a positive, long-term vision for the District, through the lens of its physical growth and change. [Small Area Plans](#) supplement the Comp Plan by providing detailed direction for specific geographic areas to manage growth, promote revitalization, or achieve other long-range planning goals. Together they guide zoning decisions made by the Zoning Commission after a public hearing, but do not set zoning.

In the District's planning and development framework, here is the sequence of actions and approvals:

Key Actors in Planning & Development	
ANC	Advisory Neighborhood Commissions are neighborhood level elected representatives, given "great weight" in final decisions of the ZC.
Applicant	The entity submitting an application, to ZC or DCRA usually the property owner or their representatives.
Community	Individuals, civic groups, businesses, and others can engage in planning processes.
Council	Council of the District of Columbia.
DCRA	The Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs.
OP	The Office of Planning.
ZC	The Zoning Commission.

Comprehensive Plan

- » Developed by **OP** with input from **ANC, Community,** and other DC agency partners.
- » Sets a vision for future land use.
- » Reviewed and approved by **Council.**
- » Guides zoning regulations, capital budget, and actions of community residents and stakeholders.

Small Area Plan

- » Developed by **OP** with support from **ANC, Community,** and other DC agency partners.
- » Provides detailed supplemental guidance to the Comp Plan for a specific geographic area.
- » May include recommendations for development, guidelines for design, public realm improvements, and public facility needs.
- » Reviewed and approved by **Council** resolution.

Zoning Change

- » Initiated by **Applicant** to realize change in development potential of property as a Zoning Map Amendment or Planned Unit Development*.
- » Decided by **ZC** following a public hearing at which **ZC** hears testimony from the **ANC, Community** and DC agencies, including **OP**, on proposed zoning changes.
- » Zoning changes must not be inconsistent with the Comp Plan.

Redevelopment

- » Initiated by **Applicant** once **DCRA** and relevant DC agencies issue construction permits.

* A [Zoning Map Amendment \(ZMA\)](#) and [Planned Unit Development \(PUD\)](#) are the two ways zoning can change on a property, subject to approval by the Zoning Commission. To learn more about these processes, explore the DC Zoning Handbook: handbook.dcoz.dc.gov.